

SUPERB TEAK CABINET FOR PIANO PROJECT



A very high quality polished teak-veneered cabinet into which the parts for our touch-sensitive piano will fit. A set of matching legs will be available and the price will be shown on our next newsletter. The teak cabinet will be available mid-June and the legs in early August.

Order As XY11M (Piano Cabinet Teak)
Price £59.90 (incl. £6.66 VAT)

REMOTE CONTROL DIMMER SWITCHES

A remote control dimmer rated at 250W. The dimmer itself is fitted above, behind or close to the lamp to be controlled. A wall switch is not necessary, but may be fitted or



left in situ if existing. The controller is a small hand-held box with a button on the side. When the button is held down the brightness of the lamp will automatically go up or down. A quick press switches the



light off and a further quick press returns the brightness to its previous level. The controller will operate through glass and has a range of about 30ft. if in line of sight of the dimmer. The controller requires a PP3 battery (not supplied) which should last for around 2 years. The dimmer and controller must be ordered separately. The dimmer must not be used with fluorescent lamps.

Order As XX35Q (Remote Control Dimmer)
Price £20.85 (incl. £1.54 VAT)
XX36P (Dimmer Control Box)
Price £8.50 (incl. 63p VAT)



A CAREER WITH MAPLIN

Because of an ever increasing expansion programme, we are continually on the lookout for bright new faces to fill vacancies in all departments within the company. At present we are enlarging our sales force and have created two vacancies for sales persons at our Westcliff shop. If you are looking for a new job, then this could be the opportunity you have been waiting for. We can offer a first class career. The work is varied and interesting and you will be dealing with customers who will probably share your enthusiasm for do-it-yourself electronic projects. As well as an excellent salary there is a company pension scheme, generous staff discounts and the knowledge that job security is excellent, working for a company that can grow and make a profit even in a climate where many other companies are having financial difficulties.

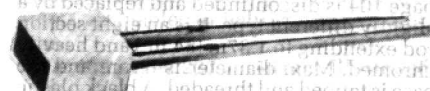
It is no secret that we have plans to expand our retail outlets throughout the country and this means that everyone joining our sales team now would have the benefit of really good promotion prospects. If you are an active person with at least a basic knowledge of electronic components and you would like to know more, then we would like to hear from you. To arrange an interview, please contact Mr. Dave Snoad on Southend (0702) 554000 or write to the shop address: 284 London Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex.

If this newsletter has been out for some weeks before you read this, we would still like you to apply as we may not have found the right people yet.



Special Offers	Page 4
New Books	Page 2
Boxes/Battery Holders	Page 2
Letters	Page 5
Complete Price List	Page 7

RECTANGULAR LED's

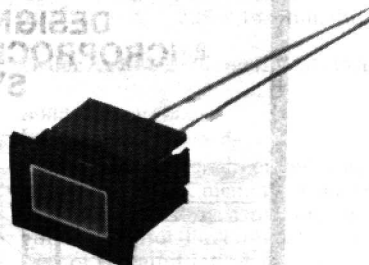


These very high quality LED's have a very uniform brightness over the illuminated rectangular area and are now available in green and yellow as well as the red described on cat. page 258. A panel mounting clip is also available. The illuminated area is 5.6 x 3.2mm. Overall dimensions 6.4 x 3.8 x 6.7mm. Cathode is denoted by the long lead.

Colour	Light output at If = 20mA	F'ward Voltage at If = 20mA
Red	4mcd	2V
Green	3mcd	2V
Yellow	4mcd	2V



The clip is moulded in black polypropylene and will fit chassis up to 10swg. It requires a 7.8 x 5.2 mm cut-out.



Order As QW96E (Square LED Red)
Price 48p (incl. 3½p VAT)
YH60Q (Square LED Green)
Price 48p (incl. 3½p VAT)
YH61R (Square LED Yellow)
Price 48p (incl. 3½p VAT)
YH62S (Square LED Clip)
Price 6p (incl. ½p VAT)

Letters to the Editor

Polyphonic Synthesisers

Dear Sirs,
I am a great fan of keyboards, on stage particularly, and I was very interested in the 5600S. Although it is obviously capable of many "way-out" sounds it would be difficult to set up when going from one number to another, also it is monophonic. In view of the price of truly polyphonic synths (Moog — £3,000) why not look into the prospects of a 5600S polysynth? Anything under about £2500 would be worthwhile.

Also...
The Roland J4 (£1,600) is 4 note polyphonic, is preprogrammed with 10 voices (piano, violin, etc.), has 8 memories that can be programmed and reprogrammed with desired sounds, for instant recall later, (a time saver) and also can play arpeggio runs!!! (automatically) Could it be worthwhile making a similar synth, or would it be far too complicated?

A polysynth, especially with control setting memories, would be a very welcome addition to your range.

Awaiting your comments with interest.

Yours sincerely,

A. J. Bell

Haileybury, Hertford

We have no doubt that a polyphonic synthesiser would be very popular, but at the moment, polyphonic synthesisers are more like organs (with envelope control (similar to our organ) and vcf's etc. tacked on the end), than they are like true synthesisers. Whilst they are very useful on stage, they do not yet even begin to have the versatility of a monophonic synthesiser like our 5600S. We are keeping a close watch on current technology and as soon as it is possible to make a true polyphonic synthesiser at a reasonable price we shall set our own design team to work.

Going Down Hill

Dear Sir,
Whatever has happened to Maplin? For years I have regarded your service as the very best, but since the publication of your new catalogue (or is it since the lorry driver's strike?) numerous components are out of stock, your service is not half as speedy, and now, with my latest order, I have not been sent another order form and envelope.

Let's hope that you will soon get back to giving the service which has made your company the best.

Yours sincerely,

S. Wickhamer

Reading, Berks.

I hope you will now find our service as speedy as ever, but it does not seem likely that the stock situation will improve very rapidly. We seem to be once again in a situation where lead times are getting longer and longer from the manufacturers and coming at a time when we are selling more and more, it is making things very difficult. (Lead time by the way is the time quoted by a manufacturer before he could make delivery after receiving our order.) Lead times on most IC's have now reached three months, whilst 74LS TTL is virtually unobtainable and CMOS is going the same way. The whole electronics industry is affected and in general things are going to get worse yet, before they improve, though our stock situation should improve a lot over the next few weeks thanks to orders placed just after our big sales increase (following the new catalogue being published) finally being delivered.

Longer Keyboards

Dear Sirs,
Your correspondent W. A. Ledger, Cardiff, raises an interesting point, but there is a musical disadvantage in extending the frequency range too far: All mechanical instruments have "spread tuning", i.e. the lower notes are flatter than they should be, and the high notes sharper, in order to satisfy the ear. (A glance at the angle of the bridge of a quality guitar will confirm this).

With dividing circuit tuning, electronic instruments cannot achieve this, and top notes in perfect pitch sound flat.

I have a Yamaha CP30 Piano with a range from E1 (41.2Hz) to G4 (3135.96Hz), 6+ octaves, and at both ends the effect is noticeable, as it is also on electric organs. An 88 note keyboard might not be such a good idea!

Yours faithfully,

J. G. Pointer

Pitlochry, Perthshire

1/4W Resistors

Dear Sir,

As you are already planning your 1981/82 catalogue, could you start supplying 1/4 watt resistors in your catalogue as a lot of projects need 1/4 watt resistors. Also could you supply any items which are or come to £10 or over and pay a deposit and pay over a certain number of months.

Yours faithfully,
Stewart Moore
Colne, Lancs.

You can, of course, always use our 1/2W resistors where 1/4W are specified, as there is no noticeable difference. Regrettably we cannot offer credit terms, but you can use a credit card to the same end.

Sun Smiles On Our Response Curves

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for a truly unparalleled service, the moaners obviously haven't tried many other firms, or take the extras of Maplin's service for granted.

I was a little disappointed to find that you had packed a potentially 400+ page catalogue into 280 pages, with the resultant loss of IC applications, projects, tables, and general information about your goods. Even then the catalogue is cramped and appears to have been printed on tissue paper. Nevertheless, these are small criticisms of a catalogue as exemplary as yours. How about giving us some of the above in the newsletter or in MES leaflets. I am especially interested in a car mounted transmitter (or transceiver) for use with your aerials (high frequency for us who are morse deaf above 1 w.p.m.).

May your excellent test gear never be needed, may the sun always shine upon your response curves, and may your ratings never be exceeded.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Fenn

Banningham, Norwich, Norfolk

P.S. I find your 0.3 in. LED displays fit perfectly adequately into your 14-pin DIL sockets, and I cannot destroy your CMOS (4011) with static no matter how hard I try!

Sorry about the catalogue paper (see — "First the bad news..."). We are considering the possibilities of selling some amateur radio gear.

Wood-End Case Sadly Missed

Dear Sirs,

First of all I must praise the new Maplin catalogue. It is truly magnificent! I spent an entire morning poring over it when it arrived. In addition to a plethora of new exotica, it has also corrected omissions from the old catalogue — like the current limiting sensing voltage for the $\mu A723$ regulator.

With all this abundance of good things, though, there is, for me, one gaping void: what has happened to the Wood End case from the old catalogue? In all your increased range of instrument cases — including butch ones with integral handles, no less — there are none to grace the living room. I have a couple of projects in the embryonic stage to use with my hi-fi and don't particularly fancy "two tone textured green" or "blue hammered stone enamel". So what about including a more domesticated case to pacify the distaff side of the household?

Referring to other letters I would echo W. A. Ledger's plea for a 6 octave piano. Going off the end of a keyboard is about as musically satisfying as falling out of bed! I would also agree with B. W. Hepburn as to the aesthetic appearance of your period timer. With the double silvered socket on the top it looks alright, but visualising it with a couple of 13A plugs stuck in — probably different types — that would be pretty dreadful. Since the only things likely to be used in connection with the timer are low wattage devices like hi-fis and radios, the obvious answer is to use the Euro facility plug and socket — now in the new catalogue, and, am delighted to see, incorporated in the 40W Amp. So, how about a Mk II Timer with the hardware removed out of sight.

Excuse the nit-picking — you are still the best.

Yours faithfully,

Andrew Manison

Cookstown, Co. Tyrone

The manufacturer of these handsome boxes told us last year that he did not want to continue producing them and we don't know of any others of a similar design. As to the Monitor Timer, the problem with fitting Europlugs is that you can not then plug the appliance into anything except the timer. Using mains sockets maintains maximum flexibility for the user.

PSU Problems

Dear Sir,

The problem P. L. Watson (January newsletter) has with his synth oscillators is almost certainly due to oscillation in the power supply. The PSU I built for my "Minisonic" synth, produced a 1/4 volt p-p sine wave at 900kHz which, while not apparently affecting the filter, envelope shapers etc., had a detrimental effect on the oscillators.

My first attempt at solving this problem by connecting a cap between zero and 9v rails only distorted the osc. tone further. Quite by accident I discovered that if a length of wire was placed in series with the cap the psu became almost stable. I then made my big mistake: Thinking that it was the Faraday induced emf in the wire which was compensating for the oscillation I connected a small inductor in series with the cap with the result that I damaged the psu making it even more unstable. I have since replaced every component in the positive side of the supply bar the smoothing electrolytics without curing the fault, is it possible that the reverse emf produced by the inductor when the unit was switched on damaged the electrolytics? I would be grateful for any suggestions on how to cure troublesome power supplies.

Yours faithfully,

Dave Brown

Birmingham

Although we don't stock the Minisonic we have had a look at the power supply circuit and it seems to us that it should work without the problems you describe. From what you say, we think you should forget Mr. Faraday and come down to earth (if you'll excuse the pun) since the fault almost certainly lies in poor earthing or bad wiring runs, poor layout or something of that sort.

TV Game Kit

Dear Sir,

Some time ago I bought your kit of parts for the Television Games (Maplin Sportsman). This worked very well initially, although television setting has always been critical, but recently has been losing sync. after being in use for about five minutes (which cannot be regained by retuning television). I have checked over the connections (without altering the condition) — except for the modulator, which is enclosed in the metal case. Perhaps you can offer a suggestion as to the cause. Thanking you.

Yours faithfully,

F. W. Douglas

Billericay, Essex.

The cause of this is almost certainly because the battery voltage drops below 5.5V in use. Replacing the batteries will cure the problem, but we recommend the use of our TV Game Mains Adaptor which eliminates the problem altogether. (See cat. page 134).

Top Octave Generator and Divider

Dear Sir,

You list in your catalogue 3 7-stage divider chips (not to mention the 74LS393 at £1.18 etc.) which could be used for octave generation in electronic musical instruments.

These are AY-1-5050 at £2.04; SAM77 at £1.48 and 4024BE at 47p. Apart from such obvious differences as supply voltage requirements, what are the significant differences between these devices?

Also, your catalogue lists a Top Octave Generator chip M087. This appears to be a similar device to the well-known AY-1-0212, but about £1 cheaper. However you do not give any operating data. Are its characteristics different from the AY chip and if so, in what way?

Yours sincerely,

R. M. Adelson

Hornby, Lewes

Both the SAM77 and the 4024BE have advantages over the AY-1-5050 and since it is dearer it can be eliminated from the choice. We stock it only because it is part of the Piano IC Kit supplied by 'General Instruments'. The advantages of the SAM77 are Schmitt trigger input, separate division stages allowing more versatility, very low inter-tone interference resulting in markedly less 'singing' in the organ as a whole and very high immunity to false triggering so that tones are purer and clearer.

The M087 is identical to the AY-1-0212 except for voltage rails. V_{DD} should be -12V and V_{SS} should be -18V (where $V_{SS} = 0V$), and since it is much cheaper it is strongly recommended for new designs.

Single Voltage EPROM

Sir,

Why is it that no amateur component supplier seems to stock the 2758 EPROM? This very convenient device seems to me to be far more suitable for the home constructor than the accepted 2708 since it requires only a single +5 volts supply to read and even on programming only a simple 25V line is required with no messy high voltage switching. Despite this it seems virtually unobtainable to people who, unlike myself, cannot buy through their place of work.

Yours faithfully

M. C. McMahon

Sheffield

We agree, the 2758 is a marvellous chip; the trouble is Intel can't make it in production quantities, so you won't be able to get it anywhere. Intel say they'll have all the bugs ironed out by early next year so we'll keep our eyes open for some when they turn up.

Maplin Service and Prices

Dear Friends,

I sympathise with the problems you are having at the moment, with your new catalogue and subsequent rush of orders, and the opening of your new warehouse. I appreciate that it will take time to train your new staff, especially at this busy time. The enclosed order is a token of my continued trust in your firm.

I feel I should make a few small points however.

- 1) This is not the first time that an item on my order has been completely ignored.
- 2) 'Goods Free' vouchers. I would be much happier if you dispensed with these and simply reduced your prices. We all know 'there's no such thing as free lunch'.
- 3) Sending out price lists and newsletters, even when the 'not required' box has been ticked must cost money, and we, the customers pick up the bill in the long run.
- 4) The margin of price over your competitors (who cannot match your service) is growing. I am prepared to pay a few coppers more for your large range and return of post service (albeit in suspension at present), but I feel that with rising overheads, you should be looking hard at ways to reduce costs without impairing your level of service. It may sound like asking the impossible, but even a few coppers over the average may drive customers elsewhere.
- 5) On a slightly less serious note, the intro to your new catalogue is terrible. Why are 'interstellar freighters streamlined for use in vacuum'? Why have they got wings? If they do enter atmosphere why have great non-aerodynamic parabolic aerials on the top? Why have a top anyway? Finally, I hope Maplin is in the forefront of interstellar trade, and going strong into the next century. Good luck to you all.

Paul Muzzle

Marton, Middlesbrough

1) This should never happen, but if when it does you return the packing slip we can discover who made the error and take them to task, so that hopefully they will be more careful in future.

2) The discount vouchers are actually a discount for the postage, because our prices include postage. The system was described in the answer to 'Charge Postage Separately' which appeared on page 6 of our March 1979 newsletter (not included in MES 122).

3) This should only happen during the first few days following publication of a newsletter.

4) Our profit margins have not changed over the past few years. What you are beginning to see is rises in the cost of goods to us. These are on the increase now, and are certain to get much worse as the year goes on. If you see prices cheaper than ours — remember our prices include VAT and postage and packing, and we give a discount against the postage on large orders. We buy more than any other electronic component retailer in the UK, so on most items we get the best prices — but we don't buy seconds, rejects or any product unless we know where it has come from and is top grade product. So you have the choice of buying top quality from us or goods of dubious quality for a few pence less.

5) We put your last questions to our Fleet Commander and he replied, "The freighters are slightly streamlined as in an emergency they could land on a planet surface and in these circumstances the aerial would be jettisoned. The 'wings' are in fact the storage areas which are filled by automatic machinery from a central shaft running from nose to tail. The freighter has a top because it frequently lands on asteroids and small airless moons where there are mining operations."

Thanks for your kind wishes.

Letters to the Editor

First The Bad News...

Dear Sir,
I wish to make some criticisms and praise on your new catalogue. Criticisms:

1) Some of the photographs/drawings in the first half of the catalogue are not very clear. Also why is the paper of inferior quality compared with that of the second half?

2) There is a complete lack of data and application circuits on quite a few IC's. In your last catalogue the IC data was excellent. I hope you can make improvements in the 1981/82 catalogue.

Some points for praise:

1) The quality of printing in the second half of the catalogue is really excellent. It is a pity that not all the catalogue is like that.

2) The introduction is another very good idea.

Might I suggest an addition to your stock. Potentiometers that will plug together to make any sized gang-pot are a worthwhile addition. They allow much more versatility.

Many thanks for the most excellent service possible.

Yours faithfully,
Paul Marriott (age 15)
Hull, Humberside

We had many problems with the printing of the catalogue. Since we used about 40 tons of paper, obtaining the right kind was a major consideration. We ordered from a mill in Finland, but at the last minute they had production problems and none of the paper in the catalogue was our original choice. If we make the catalogue with thicker (and therefore heavier) paper or include more pages then it will cost more to post and we have now reached the point where a fraction more weight will cost nearly 20p more, and since spread over 150,000 catalogues this amounts to £30,000, it is a charge we would have to pass on.

We have been asked for multi-ganged pots and dual-concentric pots before, so we will see what is available.

Maplin's Gone Haywire

Dear Sir,
I am writing to you with complaints—and praise, firstly the praise. I have dealt with Maplin for some time and I have always received surpassed excellence in service—orders placed or posted Sunday night would be back at my home by Wednesday 8.0 clock post—first class service—I have received the goods earlier—sometimes on Tuesday.

Now for the complaints—which I cannot stress strongly enough.

It seems since the new catalogue was issued—possibly all in good faith—that your return of goods has gone completely and utterly haywire—I appreciate you have taken on a lot more components, but in taking on all this extra stock to try and satisfy more customers—you seem to have lost sight of the fact that your orders are taking at least 10-14 days before completion—after your past record I find this absolutely appalling, and completely intolerable—I am now reluctantly thinking of changing to another supplier—today I have contacted two other suppliers who have promised a 48 hour delivery—also I have placed an order with one wholesaler—order completed in less than 24 hours.

Your young lady who spoke to me was apologetic—but did not seem unduly worried—I would like to point out that customers are the bread and butter of a company such as yours and cannot survive without them—orders are money!!! I shall most certainly turn to another supplier unless you can guarantee or at least try to give a better service than that which is being given at the present—what I need is service like the service you used to give.

Yours sincerely,
A. East
Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Our policy of issuing a new catalogue every two years always causes problems. It is impossible to calculate in advance what extra staff and extra stock we will need, or even when we will need them as this depends so much on the printers and the post office. This time we managed to reduce our backlog of orders in a much shorter time than previously, and we were only off our same day service for six weeks, though we did peak at seven days behind in the middle of that period. We returned to same day service in mid-March after a great deal of effort from everyone and we hope we can now maintain that service as usual.

Nice Colour Pics

Dear Sir,
Many thanks for a really excellent catalogue, and your quick, efficient service. Despite what some people say, I have found that you are the best mail-order firm in Britain, and your service is better than any 'local' electronics shop. In reply to Mr. Rowson (March newsletter) your colour pictures of knobs, cases, switches etc. allow you to 'see' what the items look like, hence removing the only disadvantage of buying external 'cosmetic' components by mail.

A couple of suggestions for stock lines.
1) I am very interested by your S.T.A.C. timer, however would it be possible for you to offer a kit, or at least a pre-punched cabinet, as I can see the holes for the keypad causing problems.

2) Secondly, how's about a Maplin t-shirt.
Again many thanks for an excellent service.

Yours sincerely,
S. J. Baker
Pershore, Worcs.

We could have a panel punched to fit one of our Flip-Top Boxes which could be connected to a hidden box with 'the works' in it. Would anyone else be interested in a Maplin t-shirt. We'll give £10 of discount vouchers to the best phrase for the shirt, (not too rude please).

Cassette & Record Deck To Match Amp & Tuner

Dear Sir,
Firstly, I must congratulate you on your excellent catalogue. I must also thank you for the service you offer—even the few errors which must inevitably occur are dealt with quickly and efficiently.

I have read with interest the information in the catalogue given on your hi-fi amplifier and tuner and have ordered the constructional details. Will you be developing a cassette deck and record deck to match this equipment, as I am sure that many of your customers would be interested? Also would you consider stocking cassettes—preferably the higher quality types.

Yours faithfully,
S. Rockett
Walsall, W. Midlands

We are not too keen on this as the major part of a cassette deck and virtually all the record deck is mechanical and not electronic. We rather feel that the blank cassette market is adequately covered by other companies.

Organ For Sale

Dear Sir,
I have fully built and tested your full stage organ MES 53, with which I have been extremely impressed, and which I am now in the process of physically redesigning and expanding.

I therefore have available all boards and components which I am prepared to sell at cost, postage free to anyone who is interested.

I would therefore be grateful if you would print this letter and the accompanying list in the next available issue of the Newsletter.

The parts available are as follows:

Qty.		
1	power supply	£17.08
2	49-note keyboards, complete with GB2 contact blocks	each £42.23
1	DM02T master oscillator	£17.68
1	Reverb module and short spring line	£10.99
1	Divider board A	£11.99
1	Divider board B	£10.98
1	Tone board A	£9.80
1	Tone board B	£6.57
2	Control board A (PCB's damaged but repaired and working)	each £15.82
6	Control board B	each £6.80
1	Sawtooth board A	£9.38
1	Sawtooth board B	£11.11
2	Mother board, completely wired and assembled with gate boards	each £14.17

1	Tone board C	£12.96
2	Tone board D	each £11.38
1	Tone board E	£11.91
1	A/B switchboard	£1.74
2	MES amp. board A	each £0.98
14	Drawbars, prewired	lot £18.20
42	Stop switches, prewired	lot £44.70

I am prepared to sell all the above as one job lot for £400, postage and packing paid.
Yours faithfully,
B. Hotham,
Chief Engineer—Radio Oman,
P.O. Box 600, Muscat,
Sultanate of Oman.

Germanium Transistor Cans

Dear Sir,
I would like to thank you for the prompt delivery of goods you supply. For my last order it took only eight days to reach me over here in Germany.

But I hope you can help me with a small problem I have. I must say I am fairly new to electronics or else I would not turn to you for your help.

My problem concerns two transistors, of the same type, which were supplied by you. The transistors concerned are of type No. AC128. The problem is that, as far as I can see this transistor which I have does not have the correct case style. It should have case style No. TO18a but mine have case style TO5 or TO18. I hope you can either identify the leads or explain what is wrong, if anything. I hope you can help as these transistors are holding up my project. Also what is the order No. and price of the rectifier diode 3A 50 PIV. I must disagree with other people about your catalogue. I like it the way it is and would think not twice but three times about buying a ring binder one which has loose leaves.

Thank you, Yours faithfully,
Sean McPoland, BFPO44.

We do have problems with germanium transistors since no-one makes them very much any more. Consequently we have to buy the best we can and these tend to be foreign types, which while meeting the electrical specification are in differing packages. The leads, however should still be in the same order (the tag being equivalent to the spot). The 3A 50PIV diode is now listed under the number 1N5400 on the price list.

Catalogue Improvements

Dear Sir,
You are to be congratulated on providing an excellent catalogue, attractively produced and comprehensive in contents.

One minor irritation is the separate price list. I appreciate that with rapidly changing prices this is a necessary evil, so I offer two suggestions to mitigate the nuisance:

- a) A pocket incorporated in the cover of the catalogue to hold the current price list.
- b) Each 'catalogue page' section should be in strict alpha numerical order of order code.

I hope you find these ideas helpful.
Yours faithfully,
B. M. Farrelly
Belfast

Two good ideas which we may be able to use in the future. I can't think why we didn't think of 'b' before, but all the best ideas seem obvious after someone thinks of them.

Graphic Equaliser Good

Dear Sir,
I have just become a 'First-time' customer and would like to congratulate you on the speed of your service, and the efficiency with which errors are corrected. But enough praise.

Several points about your 10-channel graphic equaliser kit.

i) Best kit I've ever bought—absolutely everything necessary is included (apart from the components you forgot!) Congrats again.

ii) Worst instructions I've ever used—perhaps your own sheet to supplement the article would be an idea.

iii) For people who wish to tape via the equaliser (or at least have the option), connect the 'record' socket to the 'output' rather than the 'input' as shown on the diagram. This is useful for—

- a) Making tapes of bad records (and even, to a certain extent, scratched records).
- b) Making tapes for friends/sisters/car stereos etc. for use in machines with distinctly non-linear behaviour (obviously you can't make up for a 2 in. speaker, but you can help).

Last, but not least, great catalogue, but how about printing your price-lists on a 'pull-out' section in the newsletter (ie separate from the rest) so it can be stapled or otherwise temporarily fastened in the back of the catalogue without the news part (because if the news-sheets are left around to be read (i) they get lost, (ii) people nick 'em!)

Yours eventually,
Marc Wilson
York

We are aware of the shortcomings of the ETI article, and a reprint is scheduled for early next year. Unfortunately the price list cannot be a pull-out section as it makes ten pages. The best we could do would be to allow you to take off the outer sheet and it hardly seems worth while.

Synthesiser For Sale

Dear Sir,
I have recently completed a 4600 synthesiser, and I would like to thank your staff for the excellent service they have provided during the course of this project. Despite the apparent complexity of the design, I found the synthesiser very easy to construct, and I have no hesitation in recommending this instrument to any readers who may be considering such a project.

Unfortunately my musical abilities do not match my enthusiasm for electronics, and I have reluctantly decided to offer the 4600 for sale. I would prefer to sell to a fellow enthusiast, so if any of your readers would care to make an offer, I would be pleased to hear from them. (I will sell for less than the current cost of the components).

With reference to Mr. Watson's letter in the January newsletter, my own experience with the 4600 oscillators is that they perform exactly to specification. I have run my own oscillators on a scope for many hours with no sign of trouble.

Yours faithfully,
Chris Lees
2, Churston Avenue,
Blackley,
Manchester. M9 2LF

Sound To Light Unit Mod Works

Dear Sirs,
Further congratulations on your excellent catalogue and service. Some 10 to 12 months ago I built your Sound to Light unit and was very impressed with the result. I did however notice the problem with the LED's not staying lit if a lamp went o/c. Like Mr. P. Shoebridge (M.E.S. News September '78) I was not really concerned because in my multi-light arrangement the problem was not likely to arise.

On reading the modification suggested by Mr. Rowell (M.E.S. News January '79) I thought I would try it out of curiosity, and I can confirm that it does work.

I did not change the diodes (1N4004), but the capacitor in the bass section (C30) mysteriously burnt out, I replaced it and had no further trouble.

As I have already said, in a multi-light arrangement the problem is unlikely to arise. It does however serve as a fuse failure indicator.

Yours faithfully,
T. Harvey
Dukinfield, Tameside

Out Of Stock — To Follow Shortly

Dear Editor,
I must first congratulate Maplin for an excellent new catalogue.

I now have two points to make:
1) With regard to letters concerning out of stock items, you have said that sending items on when stocks come in would be impractical. I agree that it would be so, yet I fail to understand why, when the order form format was altered, the coding 'out of stock, to follow shortly' remains. Could you please give a reason?

2) I recently ordered one of your jack plugs (among other things), and found to my annoyance that it had no rubber cable grip. I am surprised by this, since I would have thought that they would be supplied together with the plugs/sockets etc. Perhaps this could be remedied?

Yours sincerely,
C. Trelawny-Ross
Bristol, Avon

We retain this code so that we can follow on with items which we manufacture, since there seems little point in issuing credit as they cannot be obtained elsewhere. Our jack plugs use a metal crimp to clamp the cable and we have always found this satisfactory in use.

If you would like to air your views about anything to do with electronics, or ask us a question, or perhaps there's something you think another reader may be able to help you with—then write to 'The Editor', Maplin Electronic Supplies, P.O. Box 3, Rayleigh, Essex.

Please do not enclose sae's as the editor cannot enter into personal correspondence, but will do his best to answer your questions if your letter is selected. All the letters are read by the directors even if they are not printed. We should like to thank all those people who write in praise of our service, we really do appreciate your having taken the time and trouble.

Please try to keep your letters short and to the point, and please write neatly, our printers are going grey trying to typeset some of the letters: they are almost indecipherable.